

heads of reasons which have produced my determination, I do not mean an opening for future discussion, or that I may be reasoned out of it. The question is forever closed with me; my sole object is to avail myself of the first opening ever given me from a friendly quarter (and I could not with decency do it before) of preventing any division or loss of votes which might be fatal to the Republican interests."

There is no good reason to doubt that Jefferson was sincere when he made these assertions; but he had mistaken a purely temporary condition of body and mind for a lasting one. Time had restored his health and brought events of national and international importance in whose settlement he could but feel an absorbing interest. True, he was not now aggressively eager for the nomination; but it was only natural that he should not be indifferent to the spontaneous and unanimous wish of his party. It was not definitely known until Washington's Farewell Address appeared, in September, that he would retire, but his retirement was anticipated, and by midsummer Jefferson was recognized as the Republican candidate. The contest was between him and Adams, the Federalist candidate. The campaign was strangely quiet. Jefferson wrote but one political letter, and was not outside of his county during the three months preceding the election.

It was late in December when Jefferson learned the result of the contest. On January 1st, 1797, he wrote Madison: "The event of the election has never been a matter of doubt in my mind. \* \* \* Indeed, the vote comes much nearer an equality than I had expected. I know the difficulty of obtaining belief in one's declarations of a disinclination to honors, and that it is greatest to those who still remain in the world. But no arguments were wanting to reconcile me to a relinquishment of the first office or acquiescence under the second. As to the first, it was impossible that a more solid unwillingness settled on full calculation could have existed in any man's mind, short of the degree of absolute refusal. \* \* \* As to the second, it is the only office in the world about which I am unable to decide in my own mind whether I had rather have it or not have